

GAO

Report to the Honorable  
Charles E. Grassley Co-Chairman,  
Caucus on International Narcotics  
Control, U.S. Senate

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September 2001

# DRUG CONTROL

## State Department Provides Required Aviation Program Oversight, but Safety and Security Should Be Enhanced



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Accountability \* Integrity \* Reliability

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<b>Abstract</b> According to the Department of State, the Andean region continues to cultivate, produce, and export almost all of the worlds cocaine and an increasing amount of heroin. 1 Colombia is the source of 90 percent of the cocaine entering the United States and approximately two-thirds of the heroin found on the East Coast. While coca cultivation estimates have decreased by approximately two-thirds in Bolivia and Peru since 1996, increases in coca cultivation in Colombia have offset much of these successes. 2 Under States Bureau for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, the Office of Aviation, through a contract with DynCorp Aerospace Technology, supports foreign governments efforts to locate and eradicate illicit drug crops in the Andean region. In recent years, DynCorp has maintained and operated aircraft to locate and eradicate drug crops in Colombia, trained pilots and mechanics for the Colombian Army Aviation Brigade, and provided logistical and training support for the aerial eradication programs of the Colombian National Police and manual eradication programs in Bolivia and Peru. Your office raised concerns about reports you had received that the Office of Aviation might not be providing adequate oversight of its aviation program and might not be ensuring that the program operates safely. In response to these concerns, we determined whether the Office of Aviation (1) oversaw and evaluated DynCorps performance in accordance with		
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United States General Accounting Office  
Washington, DC 20548

September 14, 2001

The Honorable Charles E. Grassley  
Co-Chairman, Caucus on International Narcotics Control  
United States Senate

Dear Senator Grassley:

According to the Department of State, the Andean region continues to cultivate, produce, and export almost all of the world's cocaine and an increasing amount of heroin.<sup>1</sup> Colombia is the source of 90 percent of the cocaine entering the United States and approximately two-thirds of the heroin found on the East Coast. While coca cultivation estimates have decreased by approximately two-thirds in Bolivia and Peru since 1996, increases in coca cultivation in Colombia have offset much of these successes.<sup>2</sup>

Under State's Bureau for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, the Office of Aviation, through a contract with DynCorp Aerospace Technology, supports foreign governments' efforts to locate and eradicate illicit drug crops in the Andean region. In recent years, DynCorp has maintained and operated aircraft to locate and eradicate drug crops in Colombia, trained pilots and mechanics for the Colombian Army Aviation Brigade, and provided logistical and training support for the aerial eradication programs of the Colombian National Police and manual eradication programs in Bolivia and Peru.

Your office raised concerns about reports you had received that the Office of Aviation might not be providing adequate oversight of its aviation program and might not be ensuring that the program operates safely. In response to these concerns, we determined whether the Office of Aviation (1) oversaw and evaluated DynCorp's performance in accordance with

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<sup>1</sup>Over the years, U.S. counternarcotics efforts in the Andean region have focused on Bolivia, Colombia, and Peru. Small amounts of coca are also grown in Brazil, Ecuador, Panama, and Venezuela; however, production from these fields is believed to be minimal.

<sup>2</sup>According to State, between 1996 and 2000, the net hectares under coca cultivation in Colombia increased by 69,000—from 67,200 hectares in 1996 to 136,200 hectares in 2000, while the number of hectares under coca cultivation in Bolivia and Peru declined by 93,700 over the same period.

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applicable requirements and (2) ensured the safe operation of its aircraft and the physical security of its operational sites.

To address your concerns, we discussed these matters with cognizant U.S. officials at the Department of State, Washington, D.C., and the U.S. Embassy in Bogota, Colombia; and U.S. and DynCorp officials at the Office of Aviation's main operating base in Florida and operational sites in Colombia. We reviewed pertinent contract evaluation reports and related documentation and followed up on several recent operational and safety reviews of the Office of Aviation's program. Although we examined relevant documentation for Bolivia and Peru, we focused our review on the Office's program in Colombia because the majority of its assets and personnel are in Colombia, the threat to its safety and security is greatest there, and the U.S. counternarcotics program to Colombia recently increased significantly.<sup>3</sup>

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## Results in Brief

The Office of Aviation met both State's overall contracting oversight requirements and more specific oversight and evaluation requirements in the DynCorp contract. Office of Aviation Officials interacted daily with DynCorp managers at the main operating base and in each country, made regular site visits to each country, and reviewed DynCorp's internal reports. The Office of Aviation also relied on a series of evaluation reports prepared by Office of Aviation and DynCorp officials in-country and at the main operating base that led to a trimester contract performance evaluation. We found that the performance evaluation process often led DynCorp to take action to correct operational deficiencies.

The Office of Aviation ensured that its aviation program operates safely and is physically secure, but it can do more. The Office relied on monthly reports and the trimester performance evaluations, as well as periodic surveys and independent assessments of DynCorp's operations and facilities. Overall, these reports have concluded that the aviation program was safe and that physical security was adequate. However, several matters of concern have not been resolved. For example, forward operating locations in Colombia do not have emergency vehicles; manuals

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<sup>3</sup>In July 2000, the United States agreed to provide about \$860 million for fiscal years 2000 to 2001 to support Plan Colombia, the Colombian government's \$7.5 billion, 6-year counternarcotics plan. This amount was in addition to previously programmed U.S. assistance of over \$300 million for the same period and almost doubled U.S. counternarcotics assistance to Colombia compared with fiscal year 1999 levels.

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for certain eradication aircraft do not reflect modifications to the aircraft; and the airfield at one forward operating location and the Office of Aviation headquarters office in Colombia were not secure.

To improve the safety and security of its aviation program, we are recommending that the Secretary of State ensure that the Bureau follows up on the concerns identified in recent reviews and either complete action to address them or document why it should not. In commenting on a draft of this report, State generally concurred with the information presented and the recommendation.

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## Background

Since 1991, DynCorp Aerospace Technology has provided support services for State's counternarcotics program in the Andean region and, occasionally, in Central America. In 1998, State awarded a 5-year, cost plus award fee contract to DynCorp for approximately \$170 million to continue this support.<sup>4</sup> The Bureau's Office of Aviation manages the overall aviation program from its main operating base at Patrick Air Force Base, Florida. As the aviation program's contractor, DynCorp performs major maintenance and initial pilot training at Patrick Air Force Base and flies and maintains U.S. aircraft and trains foreign personnel at various locations in Bolivia, Colombia, and Peru. The total budget for the aviation program is about \$50 million annually. See appendix I for a summary of the aviation program's staffing and assets by country.

In Colombia, the Office of Aviation and DynCorp maintain a headquarters office and hangar at the El Dorado International Airport in Bogota. They also operate forward operating locations at airfields on several Colombian military and police bases.

- The Office of Aviation and DynCorp fly aerial eradication missions from several locations in Colombia. In recent months, they have used a Colombian Army base at Larandia and a Colombian National Police base in San Jose—usually one or the other but currently both.

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<sup>4</sup>State has awarded two 5-year contracts to DynCorp to support the aviation program. The first was awarded in 1991 for approximately \$99 million. Between the time when DynCorp's initial contract with State was scheduled to expire in 1996 and the current 5-year contract was awarded in 1998, State issued three interim sole-source contract extensions to DynCorp. See our report *Drug Control: The Department of State's Contract Award for Its Counternarcotics Aviation Program* (GAO-01-435R, Feb. 28, 2001).

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- The Office of Aviation and DynCorp are collocated with the Colombian Army Aviation Brigade in Tolemaida. They use this base primarily for training, maintenance, and repair.

As we reported in June 1999 and October 2000, U.S. estimates indicate that the illicit drug threat from Colombia has both expanded and become more complex over the past several years. Insurgent and paramilitary groups have increased their drug-trafficking activities, severely complicating U.S. and Colombian efforts to reduce illicit drug cultivation and production. For example, the insurgents exercise some degree of control over 40 percent of Colombia's territory east and south of the Andes where, according to the Drug Enforcement Administration, most of the new coca cultivation sites and most of the major drug production facilities are located.<sup>5</sup>

As a result, the aerial eradication missions are dangerous; and as a normal course, helicopter gunships and search and rescue aircraft accompany the eradication aircraft. Eradication planes and the supporting helicopters are often shot at. Aerial eradication missions have been cancelled or redirected because Office of Aviation or government of Colombia officials considered the targeted locations too dangerous.

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## Office of Aviation's Contractor Oversight and Evaluation Measures Met Requirements

The Office of Aviation's oversight of DynCorp met both State's overall contracting requirements and requirements specified in the contract with DynCorp. State requires the Office of Aviation to examine contractor performance to ensure compliance with the contract and coordinate with the contractor on all matters that may arise in the administration of the contract. The contract includes State's oversight requirements and also establishes DynCorp's performance-based award fee plan, which requires the Office of Aviation to evaluate contractor performance every 4 months to determine DynCorp's monetary award.

Under the terms of the contract, DynCorp is entitled to reimbursement of reasonable and allowable costs incurred and an award fee—which averaged about \$410,000 each trimester between June 1999 and January 2001—based on the Office of Aviation's evaluation of DynCorp's

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<sup>5</sup>*Drug Control: Narcotics Threat From Colombia Continues to Grow* ([GAO/NSIAD-99-136](#), June 22, 1999) and *Drug Control: U.S. Assistance to Colombia Will Take Years to Produce Results* ([GAO-01-26](#), Oct. 17, 2000).



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performance. The contract establishes four evaluation categories—management, technical proficiency, safety, and cost—and four performance assessment levels—outstanding, excellent, satisfactory, and unsatisfactory. Each assessment level corresponds to a range of percentages of the additional compensation that could be granted to DynCorp. For example, if the Office of Aviation rates DynCorp’s overall performance in the evaluation categories as outstanding, the Office would award a minimum of 95 percent of the award fee. An excellent rating would be 75 to 94 percent of the award fee. A key distinguishing factor between each assessment level is the Office’s evaluation of DynCorp’s ability to identify and correct deficiencies in the program or preclude deficiencies from occurring by proactive management.

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## Contract Oversight

The Office of Aviation’s oversight measures consisted of regular interaction with DynCorp officials and frequent visits to operating sites. In addition, Office of Aviation officials regularly reviewed reports submitted by DynCorp’s senior in-country managers outlining DynCorp’s performance on a daily, weekly, and monthly basis.

The Office of Aviation is collocated with DynCorp at the main operating base and in each country, thus allowing Office of Aviation officials to monitor DynCorp’s operations on a daily basis. At the headquarters office in Bogota, Colombia, for example, we observed a senior Office of Aviation official conferring with DynCorp’s operations manager about the flight schedule of the C-27 cargo plane; frequent telephone communication among Office of Aviation and DynCorp officials about operational matters, such as the delivery of needed supplies or the availability of pilots and mechanics at specific locations; and discussions about a program to verify the amount of coca eradicated. Further, during our visits to Larandia and Tolemaida, DynCorp managers made frequent contacts with their Office of Aviation counterparts concerning the status of planned security upgrades and training for the Colombian Army Aviation Brigade, respectively.

Senior Office of Aviation officials told us that they held regular meetings at the main operating base with DynCorp managers to discuss program objectives and provide guidance on operational plans and procedures. Several DynCorp employees stated that the regular meetings have improved the program’s operations. The DynCorp maintenance manager in Colombia told us that Office of Aviation officials have incorporated his expertise when drafting or revising standard operating procedures on issues relevant to his duties. Furthermore, a manager’s meeting in April 2001 addressed the delay in shipping special tools to the DynCorp

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maintenance manager in Tolemaida. To solve the problem, DynCorp is now assessing the status of requests and reviewing the procedures for ordering tools.

Senior Office of Aviation officials also made frequent visits to Colombia to oversee DynCorp operations. The operations officer made seven visits from June 1999 to March 2001. On several of his visits in 2000, he provided guidance to help establish the aviation support for the Colombian Army's Aviation Brigade. He stated that he regularly accompanies the contractors on eradication missions to provide guidance. The Office of Aviation Director and other senior officials told us they made numerous trips to overseas locations, primarily Colombia, during the same period to confer with DynCorp managers and other Office of Aviation officials and provide technical assistance.

Office of Aviation officials regularly reviewed DynCorp's reports, including monthly reports from DynCorp's in-country managers summarizing the contractor's performance. These reports are based on daily and weekly reports submitted by managers from each forward operating location. The Office of Aviation also regularly received daily and weekly reports on the flight status of all aircraft and copies of all contractor memorandums dealing with safety. The senior Office of Aviation official in Colombia told us he viewed the contractor's input as critical for his monthly evaluation of contractor performance.

Although the Office of Aviation and DynCorp interacted regularly, several Office of Aviation and DynCorp officials told us that a high turnover of DynCorp managers in Colombia over the past 2 years had led to frequent misunderstandings between the main operating base in Florida and operational sites in Colombia. We were told about several instances when managers in Colombia communicated directly with the main operating base, bypassing DynCorp managers in Bogota. In late 2000, the Office of Aviation encouraged DynCorp to promote a pilot to operations manager in Bogota and, after a new country manager was hired, provided oral and written guidance clarifying the chain of command. A number of Office of Aviation and DynCorp officials told us that these changes had alleviated tension that had been building between the Office of Aviation and DynCorp and greatly improved the overall morale of personnel in the program.

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## Contract Evaluation

Every month, senior Office of Aviation officials in Bolivia, Colombia, and Peru submit a report to the main operating base in Florida evaluating DynCorp's performance using the evaluation categories—management,

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technical proficiency, safety, and cost. The Office of Aviation Deputy Director consolidates the country reports and an evaluation of contractor performance at the main operating base into an overall monthly evaluation. The consolidated report is used to evaluate DynCorp's performance and help make the trimester award fee determination.

We reviewed the monthly and consolidated reports prepared from June 1999 through January 2001. We noted that the trimester performance evaluations encouraged DynCorp to correct deficiencies. For example:

- In August and September 1999, the senior Office of Aviation official in Peru rated DynCorp's performance in quality control (a measure within the technical proficiency category) as unsatisfactory—the lowest of four ratings. He determined that poor quality control resulted in unnecessary downtime for one of the aviation program's cargo planes and that the downtime affected daily operations. These evaluations were incorporated into the September 1999 trimester evaluation, lowering Peru's technical proficiency and overall ratings from the previous trimester evaluation. In October and November 1999, Peru's quality control ratings improved, and in January 2000 a joint review by Office of Aviation and DynCorp officials also noted improvements in Peru's quality control program. The January 2000 trimester evaluation showed Peru's quality control as excellent—the second highest of the four ratings.
- In the May 2000 trimester performance evaluation, the Office of Aviation lowered DynCorp's safety rating to satisfactory following a March 2000 internal safety survey that was highly critical of the Colombian program. Office of Aviation officials noted that most deficiencies resulted from an unqualified safety manager at one operating location. In response, DynCorp hired a new safety manager, who began conducting regular audits and inspections of each operating location in Colombia. The September 2000 trimester evaluation showed that DynCorp had addressed the shortcomings identified in the internal safety survey.
- In the January 2000 trimester performance evaluation, the Office of Aviation rated Bolivia's material support as unsatisfactory. The monthly reports leading to the evaluation cited lengthy delays in receiving spare parts and chemicals for a corrosion control program. Following the poor trimester rating, DynCorp improved the timeliness of its shipments and received an excellent rating in the April 2000 monthly report and the subsequent trimester evaluation in May 2000.

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In our review of the monthly and consolidated reports, we noted that DynCorp did not meet aspects of an evaluation category but received a high evaluation overall. Office of Aviation officials told us that in assessing DynCorp's overall performance, the evaluation system permits them to consider mitigating circumstances and other information not specifically in the formal assessment.<sup>6</sup> We found this to be the case with the contract's technical proficiency category, which is based, in part, on the time aircraft cannot fly due to (1) maintenance deficiencies or (2) needed supplies were not available. During the majority of the period we examined (June 1999 through January 2001), DynCorp met the maintenance and supply rates. However, during two periods when DynCorp did not meet the contract's rates, it was rated satisfactory or better for these two subcategories.

- During July through September 1999, more aircraft flying hours were lost due to maintenance problems than the contract allowed. Office of Aviation officials determined that this loss was beyond DynCorp's control because an unusually high number of aircraft engine changes were needed.
- During August through December 2000, more aircraft flying hours were lost than allowed by the contract because DynCorp did not have needed supplies. Office of Aviation officials considered the situation beyond DynCorp's control because it was the Office's responsibility to provide the needed helicopter mast assemblies. Further, Office officials said that DynCorp did well to come as close as it did to this measure given the lack of mast assemblies.

Although we are satisfied that the Office of Aviation considered each country's reports in preparing the consolidated reports, during July 1999 to May 2000, portions of the Bolivian Office of Aviation senior official's reports were not included. The current Office of Aviation officials in Bolivia and at the main operating base in Florida told us that the Office of Aviation official in Bolivia at the time sometimes provided information that was irrelevant to contractor performance. As a result, senior Office of Aviation officials at the main operating base often revised or excluded parts of the reports. For example, the official in Bolivia repeatedly reported that several training documents needed to be translated into Spanish, although translation was not part of the contract with DynCorp. In other instances, the official in Bolivia evaluated Office of Aviation

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<sup>6</sup>See Federal Acquisition Regulation, section 52.249-14.

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performance rather than contractor performance—in more than half the affected reports, the official reported that the Office of Aviation did not provide needed supplies or guidance on the Bolivian nationalization program.

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## Office of Aviation Ensured Safe Operations but Needs to Address Certain Safety and Security Concerns

To oversee and evaluate the safety of contractor operations and physical security of the aviation program's facilities, Office of Aviation officials relied on daily interaction with DynCorp's country managers and forward operating location managers, frequent site visits, periodic reports as part of the trimester performance evaluation, and internal and external reviews. Overall, these assessments judged aviation program operations to be safe and physically secure; however, some concerns have not been resolved.

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### Operational Safety

According to Office of Aviation and DynCorp senior officials, enhancing safety is an ongoing process, and their employees should always strive to identify and implement ways to enhance safety. To ensure that aircraft were maintained and operated safely, the Office of Aviation safety manager monitored and evaluated the safety of contractor operations at the main operating base and at overseas locations. The manager said he used a safety checklist based on U.S. government and aircraft manufacturers' requirements when inspecting contractor operations and maintenance. He said that he monitored the main operating base on a daily basis and made periodic trips to overseas locations to monitor the safety of operations and maintenance. His trip reports identified safety issues that needed to be resolved and progress made in implementing previously identified safety concerns.

The safety manager also coordinated with the DynCorp staff responsible for maintaining safe aircraft operations. For example, they worked together to update the aviation program's accident response plan, modeling it after a plan the DynCorp safety manager used while serving in the U.S. Air Force.

In addition, Office of Aviation officials conducted internal Aviation Resources Management Surveys of DynCorp operations at the main operating base and overseas locations. According to Office of Aviation officials, these surveys are intended to provide a stringent on-site safety assessment. The most recent survey for Colombia, completed in March 2000, concluded that DynCorp needed to devote more attention to safety. As previously noted, DynCorp hired a new safety manager who began

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conducting regular audits and inspections of each operating location in Colombia. In addition, DynCorp made other safety improvements, including establishing safety classes for pilots and instituting an airfield cleanup campaign.

In August 2000, the Office of Aviation requested an independent evaluation of aviation operations and safety by the Inter-Agency Committee for Aviation Policy (ICAP).<sup>7</sup> In November 2000, ICAP conducted a review of the Office of Aviation's operations at two forward operating locations and the headquarters office in Colombia and at the main operating base in Florida. In February 2001, ICAP issued its report. ICAP concluded that the aviation program in Colombia and at Patrick Air Force Base was safe but made approximately 80 suggestions and recommendations to enhance safety and security.<sup>8</sup>

Office of Aviation and DynCorp officials have taken action on or implemented most of ICAP's suggestions and recommendations. For instance:

- To improve their document control process, Office of Aviation and DynCorp officials told us they clarified the procedures for seeking comments on and approving changes to operating procedures and other directives.
- To improve maintenance oversight, DynCorp hired additional quality control staff to fill this role.
- To correct deficiencies identified at fuel stations at forward operating locations, DynCorp hired a fuel management specialist who has ensured that the deficiencies were corrected.

In some instances, Office of Aviation officials disagreed with ICAP's suggestions and recommendations. Among others, we noted the following:

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<sup>7</sup>This Committee is under the aegis of the General Services Administration. The Committee formulates aviation policies for the various civilian federal departments and agencies that maintain aircraft. The Committee also helps to ensure that agency aircraft fleets are maintained properly and are operationally safe through on-site reviews. The Committee appoints a team of aviation experts from various federal agencies to perform these reviews.

<sup>8</sup>Some of the suggestions and recommendations were not specifically labeled as such, and some were duplicative.

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- ICAP recommended that search and rescue helicopters accompany eradication aircraft on night operations. The Office of Aviation Director and Deputy Director said that eradication planes are much less likely to be shot down during night operations than in the daylight because the planes cannot be easily seen. Deploying helicopters nearby would serve to alert drug traffickers to the impending arrival of eradication aircraft and increase the likelihood that the traffickers could shoot them down. Further, deploying many aircraft during night operations increases the likelihood of aircraft accidents.
  - ICAP recommended that the Office of Aviation update manuals to reflect modifications that were made to certain eradication aircraft. Office of Aviation officials noted that the aircraft in question were originally used 40 years ago as unarmed observation planes by the U.S. military. Later, the U.S. military added armaments<sup>9</sup> and tested and documented their effect on the airplane's performance. According to the Office of Aviation Director, the aviation program's modifications have less effect on the aircraft's performance than the U.S. military's modifications. He said that as a result the manuals reflect a worse case than necessary and the aircraft does not need additional testing. In addition, such testing would be very expensive.

In other instances, Office of Aviation and DynCorp officials agreed with ICAP's suggestions or recommendations but have not yet corrected the problem.

- ICAP recommended that the aviation program provide emergency vehicles at its forward operating locations to assist in the event its aircraft have an accident during takeoff or landing. Office of Aviation officials said that they have asked the Department of Defense to identify any excess emergency vehicles in its inventory. The Office of Aviation was also searching for used emergency vehicles because new emergency vehicles are very expensive.
- ICAP pointed out that the aviation program needed to improve its management information system. Office of Aviation officials said they are implementing a new, integrated management information system and obtaining a satellite communications system to improve

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<sup>9</sup>The Office of Aviation's eradication aircraft are not armed.

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communication between remote locations. They said they expect to have both systems in place by November 2001.

- ICAP found that certification and training records for maintenance personnel were often not readily available or were dated. Office of Aviation and DynCorp officials agreed, and the DynCorp Program Manager said he would either hire a training coordinator or assign existing staff to fulfill those responsibilities.

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## Physical Security

Although Office of Aviation and DynCorp officials assess physical security through regular site visits and inspections, State's Bureau of Diplomatic Security has overall responsibility for ensuring a secure as possible workplace for U.S. government employees at overseas locations. Its Regional Security Office (RSO) in Bogota has assessed the aviation program's security needs through site visits and inspection reports.

RSO and Office of Aviation and other Bureau officials have reviewed Office of Aviation sites in Colombia to determine what action had been taken on previously identified weaknesses and to determine the adequacy of physical security. In May 2001, the forward operating location in use at Larandia still needed security improvements and, according to RSO officials, was especially vulnerable to sabotage. Specifically, a public road runs within a few feet of and parallel to a runway used for aerial eradication missions. On weekends the road carries considerable civilian traffic. The only physical security is a chain-link fence and a partially completed barrier. We observed that the public road had only minimal security with a checkpoint at the base entrance and an unmanned bunker near the airfield. RSO and other security reports have recommended additional security measures, such as adding a second checkpoint and erecting a solid barrier between the road and the airfield.

Further, both RSO and ICAP have concluded that the headquarters office and hangar at the Bogota airport are not secure. The ICAP report identified this location as being especially vulnerable. During several weeks in April and May 2001, we observed that only one guard was at the entrance at any given time, and the office had no x-ray or bomb-detection equipment to inspect packages. Further, the office and hangar are on a public road adjacent to a commercial shipping business. Each day, we observed a large volume of vehicles entering the area and parking near the aviation program's office. Both RSO and ICAP recommended that State find a more secure facility.



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Office of Aviation and Bureau officials agreed with the physical security assessments and recommendations and said upgrades in security should be completed in the next few months. However, they noted that they must rely on government of Colombia and U.S. Embassy support to make the improvements because aviation program facilities are not located on U.S. government property.

- Office of Aviation officials told us that the U.S. Embassy is negotiating with the Colombian Army base commander at Larandia to increase security checkpoints on the public road. In addition, the Colombia National Police have increased the number of staff assigned to the airfield.
- The U.S. Embassy had found a more secure location for the aviation program's headquarters office and hangar at the Bogota airport and had been negotiating a lease. However, according to Office of Aviation officials, that location is no longer suitable and U.S. Embassy and Bureau officials have begun a search for another location.

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## Conclusions

The Office of Aviation complied with the requirements of the State Department and the DynCorp contract through an integrated oversight and performance evaluation process. The Office's oversight measures, which include reviews of DynCorp reports and frequent communication, are a fundamental part of the process. These measures provide the Office with sufficient information to evaluate the effectiveness of DynCorp's performance. Based on this information, each month the Office of Aviation formally notifies the contractor of how well it is doing and actions that it needs to take to improve performance. These steps culminate in a trimester evaluation leading to a performance-based, monetary award. This monetary award serves as an incentive for the contractor to cooperate with the Office of Aviation throughout the evaluation process.

Because Office of Aviation and contractor staff in Colombia must perform their mission in a hostile environment, maintaining the safety and security of these personnel, the physical structures, and aircraft is crucial. Although the Office of Aviation has taken steps to improve safety and security in Colombia, it has not completed all actions that ICAP and RSO identified as necessary. We recognize that guaranteeing the safety and security of Office of Aviation and contractor employees and assets is very difficult. Nevertheless, the Office of Aviation has not yet fully implemented all suggestions and recommendations to ensure that its employees and contractors work in locations that are as safe and secure as possible.

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## Recommendation for Executive Action

To improve the safety and security of the Office of Aviation's forward operating locations and headquarters office in Colombia, we recommend that the Secretary of State direct the Assistant Secretary of State for the Bureau for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs to document what remains to be done to address the suggestions and recommendations made by ICAP and RSO and when action is expected to be completed. In those instances where the Bureau disagrees that corrective action is necessary, we recommend that it document the reasons why it disagrees.

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## Agency Comments and Our Evaluation

The Department of State provided written comments on a draft of this report (see app. II). It stated that the report findings are essentially factual and correct and that it will continue to pursue improvements where needed. State also noted, as we did, that many of the concerns presented in the report are outside the control or influence of the Office of Aviation. Therefore, we urge the Assistant Secretary of State for the Bureau for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs to work with the Bureau of Diplomatic Security and the U.S. Embassy in Bogota, in particular, to complete required action in these areas.

In addition, in oral comments, Office of Aviation officials provided technical comments that we have incorporated into this report, as appropriate.

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## Scope and Methodology

To determine what oversight and evaluation requirements were applicable for the DynCorp contract, we reviewed State's regulations for contract oversight and the relevant contract provisions. We also discussed the contract oversight and evaluation requirements with State's contract officer. To determine whether the Office of Aviation was adhering to the applicable oversight and evaluation requirements, we examined the trimester performance evaluation documentation for the period June 1999 through January 2001 in detail. Specifically, we

- examined each of the monthly reports from Bolivia, Colombia, and Peru and the consolidated reports and related documents prepared by Office of Aviation and DynCorp officials for the period and
- discussed the specific reports and issues raised in them with Office of Aviation's senior officials, including the Director, the Deputy Director, and the Contract Technical Officer, at Patrick Air Force Base, Florida, and other Office of Aviation officials in Washington, D.C.

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In Colombia, we also discussed specific reports with Office of Aviation officials and DynCorp managers who had first-hand knowledge of the evaluations and the status of DynCorp's efforts in the country at the time the reports were prepared.

To determine whether the Office of Aviation ensured the safe operations of its aircraft and physical security of its facilities, we examined the safety issues raised in the monthly reports prepared for the trimester performance evaluations and the findings of the recent ICAP and RSO reports and Aviation Resources Management Surveys. We met with the team that conducted the ICAP review and discussed their methodology and criteria and the support for many of their findings in more detail than is presented in ICAP's report. We followed up with Office of Aviation officials in Washington, D.C.; Patrick Air Force Base, Florida; and in Colombia to determine the status of their efforts to address the shortcomings raised in the reports. In Colombia, we discussed safety and physical security issues with cognizant Office of Aviation officials and DynCorp managers at the headquarters office at the El Dorado International Airport in Bogota, the forward operating location at Larandia, and the maintenance and training facility at Tolemaida. At each site, we also toured the facilities to make our own observations and met with fixed-wing aircraft and helicopter pilots and mechanics to obtain their views on flight operations, safety, and physical security. In addition, at the main operating base in Florida, we flew on an eradication training mission.

Finally, we discussed the Office of Aviation's implementation of its contract oversight and evaluation requirements and germane safety and security issues and concerns with the U.S. Ambassador and Deputy Chief of Mission at the U.S. Embassy in Bogota, Colombia; senior Bureau officials in Washington, D.C.; and the Director and Deputy Director at the main operating base in Florida.

Our review was conducted from November 2000 through August 2001 in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards.

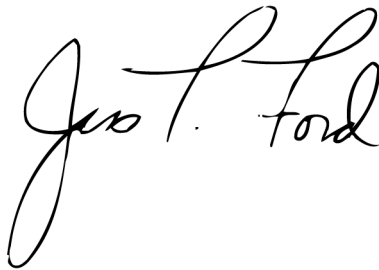
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We are sending copies of this report to the Chairman, Senate Caucus on International Narcotics Control; interested congressional committees; and the Secretary of State. Copies will also be made available to other interested parties upon request.

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If you or your staff have any questions concerning this report, please call me at (202) 512-4268. An additional GAO contact and staff acknowledgments are listed in appendix III.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Jess T. Ford". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial "J" and a distinct "T" and "F".

Jess T. Ford, Director  
International Affairs and Trade

# Appendix I: Aviation Program Staff and Aircraft

The State Department’s Office of Aviation manages a major counternarcotics aviation program with a highly mobile workforce that includes State employees and staff on loan from other U.S. agencies. As of July 31, 2001, the Office of Aviation had 24 staff to oversee the contractor-operated aviation program in Bolivia, Colombia, and Peru. Table 1 lists the number of Office of Aviation staff, where they are located, and their major job responsibilities.

Table 1: Office of Aviation Staff, Location, and Responsibilities, as of July 31, 2001		
Location	Staff	Major responsibilities
Washington, D.C.	3	Coordinate activities with other State and U.S. government agencies and provide administrative support.
Patrick Air Force Base, Florida	11	Manage the aviation program for all overseas locations and oversee DynCorp management, maintenance, and training activities.
Bolivia	4	Act as aviation advisers to oversee DynCorp maintenance and training activities.
Colombia	3	Act as aviation advisers to oversee DynCorp operations, maintenance, and training activities.
Peru	3	Act as aviation advisers to oversee DynCorp maintenance and training activities.

Source: State Department.

As of July 31, 2001, DynCorp, the contractor that implements the aviation program, employed about 545 staff—including 25 fixed-wing aircraft pilots hired under a subcontract with Eagle Aviation Services Technology, Inc. Of the 545 employees, 344 are assigned to Colombia—about 90 are U.S. citizens and count against the congressionally-mandated ceiling limiting U.S. civilian contractors in Colombia at any time to 300.<sup>10</sup> About 88 DynCorp employees are stationed in Colombia permanently; the rest—mainly pilots and mechanics—rotate in and out of Colombia about every 2 weeks. Table 2 shows the number of DynCorp employees supporting State’s aviation program, where they are located, and their major job responsibilities.

<sup>10</sup>Title III, chapter 2, sec. 320e (b)(1)(B) of the Emergency Supplemental Act, FY 2000, as enacted in the Military Construction Appropriations Act, FY 2001, P.L. 106-246, 114 Stat. 576.

**Table 2: DynCorp Employees Supporting State's Aviation Program, as of July 31, 2001**

Location	Employees	Major responsibilities
Patrick Air Force Base, Florida	154	Manage and support programs in all three countries, perform major maintenance on aircraft, and provide initial training for pilots.
Bolivia	20	Train helicopter mechanics who maintain aircraft supporting the Bolivian Army's manual eradication program.
Colombia	344 <sup>a</sup>	Work as pilots, mechanics, and managers, and train the Colombian Army UH-1N helicopter mechanics and pilots and help with the Colombian National Police eradication program.
Peru	27	Train helicopter mechanics who maintain aircraft supporting the Peruvian Army's manual eradication program.

<sup>a</sup>This number varies daily due to rotations in and out of Colombia.

Source: State Department.

Table 3 lists the number and type of aircraft the Office of Aviation has assigned to Patrick Air Force Base and each of the three countries involved in the aviation program.

**Table 3: Office of Aviation Aircraft by Location, as of July 31, 2001**

Location	Transport aircraft	Eradication aircraft		Helicopters		Crop identification aircraft
	C-27	OV-10D	T-65	UH-1H	UH-1N	C-208
Patrick Air Force Base, Florida <sup>a</sup>	1	7	0	1	2	0
Bolivia	0	0	0	16	0	0
Colombia	2	5	5	6	40	1
Peru	1	0	0	14	0	0

<sup>a</sup>Of the aircraft at Patrick, four of the OV-10Ds were being modified for aerial eradication operations in Colombia, and one OV-10D and the C-27 were undergoing scheduled maintenance. The other aircraft are used primarily for training.

Source: State Department.

# Appendix II: Comments From the Department of State



**United States Department of State**

*Chief Financial Officer*

*Washington, D.C. 20520-7427*

*AUG 28 2001*

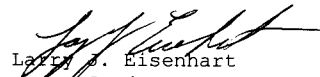
Dear Ms. Westin:

We appreciate the opportunity to review your draft report, "DRUG CONTROL: State Department Provides Required Oversight of its Aviation Program but Safety and Security Concerns Remain," GAO-01-1021, GAO Job Code 320008.

The Department of State believes the report findings are essentially factual and correct. We find many of the suggestions to be helpful and will continue to pursue improvements where needed. However, it must be noted that many of the concerns presented in the report are outside of the control or influence of the Air Wing; therefore, we will coordinate with the post to complete required action in these areas.

If you have any questions concerning this response, please contact Mr. Robert Etheridge, Chief, Logistics Maintenance Administration Division, Office of Aviation, Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, at (202) 776-8806.

Sincerely,

  
Larry A. Eisenhart  
Acting

Enclosure:

As stated.

cc: GAO/IAT - Mr. Huntington  
State/OIG - Mr. Atkins  
State/INL - Mr. Etheridge

Ms. Susan S. Westin,  
Managing Director,  
International Affairs and Trade,  
U.S. General Accounting Office.

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# Appendix III: GAO Contact and Staff Acknowledgements

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## GAO Contact

Albert H. Huntington, III (202) 512-4140

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## Acknowledgements

In addition to the contact named above, Jim Strus and Chris Hall made key contributions to this report.



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